

# CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF

POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART

Fifth Series

ESTABLISHED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, 1832

CONDUCTED BY R. CHAMBERS (SECUNDUS)

No. 188.—VOL. IV.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 6, 1887.

PRICE 1½d.

## AN OLD ENGLISH FAIR.

At one end of the picturesque old High Street of the ancient city of Winchester there rises conspicuously a steep hill. It shuts in the town at the east end; and though the town is now making efforts to climb up where it may, and to spread away to the breezy healthful downs beyond, the face and summit of the hill itself happily cannot be covered with bricks and mortar, for it is public property, and forms the park of the citizens. On the steep westward side are cut winding walks, where young trees and shrubs are planted; while wild downland flowers linger among the grass. On the south, the outline is wilder; the chalk has crumbled away, and is left white and bare and jagged like sea-cliffs, suggesting a reversal of the Laureate's line, 'There rolls the deep where grew the tree,' and hinting of days when the white walls of Winchester may have been lapped by blue waves, and the site of her cathedral been lost in 'the silence of the central sea.' The green hilltop, and even the excavation in its side, which a railway in piercing the hill has made, add not a little to the beauty of the narrow street below; and from the summit there is as lovely a view of gray cathedral, red roofs, and trees, the long High Street, and hills again beyond, as one need wish to see.

Standing on that hilltop on an autumn morning, when the sun is on the city, and the figures of the citizens are seen leisurely going about their business, and the voices of a few children and the slow chime of the cathedral clock alone break the silence—it is difficult to conjure up the scene on this same St Giles' Hill in September five or six centuries ago. The whole plateau of the hill, so the vision would reveal to us, is seen to be covered with what looks like a second town, a town of little wooden houses or booths, set out in regular streets, and shut in, not by stone walls with massive gates, like the city below, but by a high wooden palisade. The streets are devoted to rude shops, each street to one special kind of merchandise,

or to traders of one nation, and named accordingly, after the good old fashion which survives in the nomenclature of many streets to-day. There are trades in wine, in spices, in drapery, in the wares of the goldsmith or the brass-worker, the potter and the furrier; monastic shopkeepers, Normans and Poles, and Cornish men, who, in their far Celtic corner of the land, hardly ranked as Englishmen in those days; and, in one quarter, a show of birds and beasts, where the great flocks, and the monks, who in their quiet life may well have been glad of a little quaint animal companionship, might pick up a curious pet in the shape of a monkey, a bear, a falcon, or a ferret. Gothic taste still introduced the carved likenesses of such creatures in the churches of the time. And this odd little wooden town is crowded with an odder set of figures than even the great Exhibition year of 1851 brought together in a friendly throng. Foreigners at their varied stalls preside over their representative goods; a medley of buyers and sightseers, citizens and strangers, mingle in the streets. Here are nobles and ladies in the rich costume of the period; men in tunic and mantle, long hose and pointed shoes; women in straight graceful gowns and wimples; artificers, servants, brothers from the monasteries. An occasional horseman, sharply eyeing all that goes on, and looking out for the tradesman who is more shrewd than honest, or the yokel who has drunk more beer than he can carry peaceably, acts as policeman; and as police court and appeal court in general, there stands in the midst of the town the great Pavilion of no less a person than the mighty Lord Bishop of Winchester; while at the north side of the hilltop is the chapel of St Giles, the saint in whose honour all this noise and bustle are supposed to have originated. For the great St Giles' Fair is being held.

Free trade, railways, good roads, popular government, have now swept these old marts off the face of England. In Germany and in Russia, the custom lingers; but the shows and merry-go-rounds, shooting-galleries, and sweet-

stuff stalls of to-day, are but a miserable mockery of those old English fairs of which St Giles' in Winchester was for centuries one of the largest and most important. How they came to be held on the festival days of saints, when people gathered together in great numbers to worship in some church—how the feast-days developed into holidays, and the holidays into fairs—how the churchyard of the church whose patron saint was being honoured was a common place for setting up stalls of merchandise—how the king granted privileges to regulate the fairs, and his shaky revenues or the revenues of the church benefited at the expense of local shopkeepers—and how Sunday was a specially favourite day for these carnivals, until the pious King Henry VI. forbade such a breaking of the Sabbath—is perhaps tolerably familiar to us. But the vast importance, the commercial significance, the curious tyranny, and the quaint ceremonies of these forerunners of International Exhibitions and Colinderies, are more difficult to realise; so that one welcomes the translation, lately edited and published by Dr Kitchin, the learned Dean of Winchester, of the charter granted to St Giles' Fair in 1349, which still exists among the ancient documents in Winchester Cathedral, as giving us some insight into the practical working of the thing.

Winchester had then ceased to be the proud capital of England; she was sinking and paling before the rising light of London; her varied trades would not long suffice to keep her in the forefront of commerce; her old castle was no longer the chief residence of our kings, or the meeting-place of our parliaments. But her greatness was not yet past, and her mighty fair, held, according to this charter, 'from time immemorial,' was still in all probability the principal emporium in the kingdom, celebrated throughout the civilised western world. The revenues were granted by the Red King, whose charter is the first that can be traced, to the Bishop of Winchester. And to the bishop—with the exception of small payments to several religious houses—they continued to pass, and were, it would seem, employed in the erection of the magnificent cathedral, in the time of Rufus, by Bishop Walkelyn, whose fine Norman crypt and other parts still remain; and later on by Edyngton, who was beginning to recast the nave in the Perpendicular style carried out by Wykeham. Edward III. refers to the past charters in his own grant, exalting the fame of his predecessors at the same time. 'The Lord William of renowned memory' granted a fair of three days; 'Henry of glorious memory' extended it to eight days; 'the Lord Stephen of famous memory' gave six additional; and 'the Lord Henry of good memory' made up the number to sixteen. For a fair of sixteen days King Edward ratified the grant, and the benefits thereof, to the bishop; 'and lest, through growth of human badness and lapse of memory, these should hereafter become doubtful, or be challenged and subtly disputed, and rather that they may surely and indubitably remain and last for ever, we for ourselves and our heirs have fully granted, and by this our charter have confirmed to the said Bishop William and to his church the perpetual enjoyment during the sixteen fair-days for himself and his successors of all and singular

the liberties, immunities, and customs aforesaid.' Through the 'growth of human badness,' or other causes, His Majesty's prospective beneficence is not of much account to the Bishop of Winchester in this nineteenth century; but at the time, the grant must have been of no small consequence.

In the first place, all trade was stopped in the city. 'No tradesman of Winchester or other man shall sell or offer for sale any merchandise or goods; and if they do, such goods shall be forfeited to the bishop.' Even the pedlars were not allowed to take round their 'small goods, such as purses, gloves, knives, &c.,' without paying a tribute to the bishop for the privilege of opening their packs. And in the second place, no merchant might sell or show goods within a circuit of seven leagues of the fair, on penalty of forfeiture of the goods to the bishop. Seven leagues were about ten and a half miles; but, by a special clause, Southampton, twelve miles distant, was included in the edict as far as all things except victuals were concerned. The trade of the whole district was thus forced to St Giles' Hill—Southampton, though protesting, having to submit; and for everything that entered the fair, toll was paid to the bishop, save by the merchants and citizens of London, Winchester, and the Honour of Wallingford. For all firewood, corn, hay, and charcoal that came into the city, a customs duty was also levied; and 'for every stall for the sale of bread in the top of the High Street of the city on the Sunday in fair-time, a halfpenny.' Some of the dues were pretty heavy. My Lord Bishop took fourpence for each falcon, ferret, ape, or bear, or cask of wine or cider sold; appropriated a fat goose out of every baker's dozen, charged fourpence for a cartload of merchandise, twopence for a pack of mercery, a penny for every 'burden borne by a man,' a halfpenny for each smaller pack; and so on.

Nor were these arbitrary restrictions imposed upon trade, all, though probably the city traders hardly approved of this influx of foreigners and the interference with their business. Matthew Paris recounts how, in the year 1245, Henry III. filled his purse by establishing a fair at Westminster, and ordering all the London traders to shut their shops, and all other fairs throughout England to be suspended for fifteen days; and how he tried the plan again four years later; but on both occasions the storms and rains made the unfortunate dealers' days anything but fair days, and spoilt their merchandise.

Surprise has been expressed that towns submitted to this ingenious method of taxation. But besides this, Winchester yielded up all civic authority to the bishop's representatives; and the worthy mayor and all other functionaries retired for the time being into private life. Jurisdiction over the burgesses as well as commerce was all regulated from that Pavilion, or *Pavilionis Aula*, on the hill, whose memory is handed down to the present day in the curiously corrupted name of a house, Palm Hall, which stands, a perpetual puzzle to the unlearned stranger, on its site. On the eve of St Giles' day (August 31), there entered the city at sunset by the King's Gate, or the Southgate, the justiciaries of the bishop; and at the gate the mayor, bailiffs, and citizens were bound to meet them and hand over the keys and custody of that

gate. Next, they all rode together to the Westgate—the picturesque ivy-clad old gate which still spans the upper end of the High Street—and received the keys of that entrance and the ‘tron’ or measure of wool of the city; and the proclamation of the fair and the suspension of the town’s business was read. Similar ceremonies followed at the Northgate and the Eastgate, after which the civic rulers escorted the bishop’s functionaries to the Pavilion, and were there dismissed to their homes. The justiciaries forthwith chose mayor and bailiffs, marshal and coroner, to their own liking, and their sixteen days’ rule of the city began. ‘And the bishop, from the time that the keys and custody of the gates have been delivered to him, shall, by his justiciaries and other ministers, have custody of the whole city, and cognisance of all pleas between the men and tenants of the city and all other persons, within a circuit of seven leagues round the fair, regarding breaches of law, debts, and all contracts.’

The next day, September 1, business commenced in earnest. Guards were set at the outposts of the city, on all the main roads, to levy toll on saleable goods; sellers of food in the city were removed, together with their comestibles, to appointed spots outside the city, where only they might dispose of their bread and other victuals; while a species of contract for the supply of food to the buyers and sellers at the fair was entered into, by every butcher, baker, and fishmonger in the place being commanded to repair to the Pavilion, and from them being chosen ‘the most competent, lawful, and discreet men to serve those who come to the fair with wholesome, useful, and sufficient victuals;’ and woe betide him who sent bad stuff, for it was forfeited, and the owner ‘none the less heavily fined.’ Meanwhile, an inspectorship of weights and measures, and supervision over the quality and quantity of meat and drink sold, was exercised over the city from the Pavilion. All weights, measures, balances, and ellwands in the seven-league circuit were brought before the justiciaries; those found unjudicially passed were burned, and the men who used such in fair-time fined ‘to the bishop’s benefit.’ At any hour in the day the justiciaries might walk down into the city and taste any cask of wine kept for sale; and if they discovered it to be mixed, stale, or unwholesome, forthwith those casks were hauled out of the cellars and had their heads knocked off, the innkeepers being, as a matter of course, fined also for the bishop’s benefit. Adulteration was not to be lightly practised in those days. Nor were raids on the bakers unknown; my lord’s servants paid visits now and again to the bakers, and carried off a loaf or two of bread—be it noted that the justiciaries themselves were the publicans’ visitors—to the Pavilion to be weighed; ‘and if they prove short, they shall be forfeited to the bishop, and the baker be put in the pillory, or otherwise be fined.’

The Pavilion was also a place of very summary jurisdiction, wherein the justiciaries meted out punishment to dishonest merchants, and to thieves and strolling vagabonds, whom the great fair would undoubtedly bring together in large numbers. It was a ‘Piepowder Court,’ the court having rule over the dusty-foots or pedlars (the

*pieds poudreux*); or, as has otherwise been—probably with less accuracy—asserted, the court wherein justice was done to men before the dust of the fair was off their feet. A dusty-foot was a wandering pedlar who got his living by selling small ware from his pack, and had no settled home. So to Piepowder Court came all delinquent fair-folk; and here, too, were settled all disputes and wrong-doings occurring during the sixteen days in the city, within the seven-league circuit, or in Southampton. It is a curious memory to think of the culprits of the big seaport, and of all the country for ten miles around Winchester, the disputants and the ill-doers, being dragged up to the top of that quiet ridge of downland which overlooks the little city to-day. It will be a matter of future history how, only a year or two since, certain of the citizens objected to the removal to this hill summit of an old Russian gun captured in the Crimea; and how they carried the position by assault one midsummer night, and restored the precious relic to its old proud position in the Broadway of the High Street.

From St Giles’ day, September 1, to September 15, this condition of affairs lasted: the trading and trafficking, the gazing and haggling, and buying and selling in this queer wooden town within its high wooden palings, on the edge of the downs; the merchants bringing in their wares from the ends of the land and from across the sea to ‘Drapery’ and ‘Spicery’ and ‘Pottery’ and other departments of the mart, until the vigil of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin (September 7), after which date a fine or distraint on his goods awaited the tardy comer; the townspeople passing in and out of the gate that overlooked the town, the country folk swarming through that which led out upon the country—for there appear to have been two exits, both of which were jealously guarded, for fear of the inroads of thieves, or of smugglers slipping in with untaxed goods. The bishop had his stall as well as his customs duties and fines from other dealers; several monasteries dealt in wine and spices; and the foreigners from Normandy and the Low Countries, Poland, and such distant regions, and the vendors and the buyers from across broad English counties, abode gipsy-fashion on the hilltop, procuring their food and drink from the duly licensed ‘lawful and discreet men’ of Winton.

Through the mellow sunshine of pleasant autumn days, and through, also, autumn rains that plashed down upon and into the light tents and booths, and damaged the goods, and made mud-walks of the extemporised streets—until, perhaps, as is so mournfully told of the Westminster fair, the unfortunate dealers had to eat their victuals with their feet in the mire and the wind and wet about their ears—the trade of a district over thirty miles in circumference, and the commerce of one of the greatest international marts of the time, went briskly forward upon St Giles’ Hill, from the hour when the sun climbed the sky each morning of the sixteen days behind Magdalen Hill, down to the hour when he sank below the western ridge. At the end of the long day, the marshal rode forth from the Pavilion, immediately after sunset—about half-past six o’clock—through the streets of the fair, and pro-



claimed that all business must cease and stalls be closed. Nor were any lights or fires allowed at night, except in a 'lamp or mortar,' and wisely, for fire was the most imminent danger that threatened the stores of merchandise within the wooden walls. St Giles' Church perished with the booths in one outbreak; and in another, the same century, an adjacent suburb of the city caught fire from the burning stalls. So the marshal rode up and down the town, as the twilight began to fall, making his proclamation, and the citizens went down the hillside to the quiet, well-nigh deserted streets of Winchester; and the merchants put up their goods and retired within their booths; and till the rising of the next day's sun, no one but the bishop's officers and justiciaries might move about, on pain of fine, within the fair.

Amid all the changes and chances of England's history for four or five centuries, the glory of the fair survived. Charters and old writers tell us of it; St Giles' Hill reminds us of it, and looks down upon the few shabby stalls and swing-boats that once in the year invade the High Street and travesty its greatness. But Queen Anne, who stands in effigy beside the quaint old town clock in that High Street, is not more dead than St Giles' fair, and poets no longer sing with Langland, in *Piers Plowman*, 'To Winchester I went unto the faire.'

#### RICHARD CABLE, THE LIGHTSHIPMAN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'MEHALAR,' 'JOHN HERRING,'  
'COURT ROYAL,' ETC.

#### CHAPTER XXXIII.—PENTARGON.

THE morning broke after a stormy night, broke wild and haggard. On the horizon a white shimmer under heavy clouds that would not rise, from which fell lashes of dark rain over the light—a shimmer cold and ghastly as that of the half-closed eye of a dead man. The sea raced inland, in rolling piled-up billows, shaking itself, roaring, spluttering, raging, bent on tearing itself to shreds on the cutlass-like reefs, and beating itself to spray on the cuirass-like cliffs that defended the north Cornish coast. The wind had been blowing a hurricane all night, shifting a few points from south to north, but always with a main drive from the west, like the dogged determination of a madman making feints to throw his victim off his guard, but never swerving from his murderous purpose. The sea, heaped together, in jostling billows, was caught and compressed between the horns of Padstow Point and Hartland. In that vast half-moon, walled up to the sky with perpendicular iron-bound precipices, the white horses bounded and tumbled over each other, and rolled and were beaten down in the conflict. They plunged at the barriers and leaped high into the air, snorting foam, shaking their manes, and fell back broken, torn, to be trampled into the deeps by other billows, likewise rushing on their destruction. A vessel that enters within the bow of that vast arc, when the wind is on shore, is infallibly lost, and the *Bessie* on the morning in question had been driven within the fateful limits.

As already mentioned, Mrs Cable's mother was

a Cornishwoman. Bessie Cable had never visited her mother's native county; but an occasional letter, perhaps once a year, had kept up a link between her and an old mining uncle, Zackie Pendarves, at St Kerian. The man was now dead, and he had left his small savings and cottage to his only known relative, his niece Bessie, whom he had never seen. The bequest came opportunely; for when Richard told his mother of his intention to leave Hanford, she was able to propose that they should migrate to Cornwall and take up their residence in Uncle Zackie's house. What the size of that house was, how much land went with it, in what condition of repair the house was, that was all unknown. Nevertheless, it was a freehold, their own; and the cottage at Hanford was held on a half-yearly tenancy. Richard at once agreed to his mother's proposal. At St Kerian they would begin a new life, leaving behind them all disturbing recollections.

So Richard manned the yacht, and, without allowing his purpose to transpire, shipped his family and goods away, sailed down Channel, doubled the Land's End, and was at once caught in a sudden storm. He had never been in these seas before; he knew nothing of the coast save what he could gather from his chart; but he saw that his only chance was to keep out to sea; and all night he struggled to make head against the gale. When the day broke, he saw that his efforts had been fruitless—the yacht had been driven within the threatening horns, terrible as Scylla and Charybdis. Neither Richard nor one of the crew had closed an eye all night; every man's energies had been at full strain. Cable had not been down into the cabin. Whether his mother slept or watched, he knew not; but she was probably aware of the danger. His dear little ones slumbered, confident of their safety whilst the father was in command on deck. They were not afraid of the water; the tossing of the sea did not trouble them. They were accustomed to it, as tiny water-birds. Often, one or other had been taken to the lightship, and had been injured to the roll and pitch of a vessel, and they minded it no more than the baby minded the sway of the cradle. Why should they fear, any more than the baby that was rocked to sleep by grannie's foot? This was their father's great cradle, and the motion soothed their little brains.

All night long, hope had been strong in Cable's breast; he trusted that he had been able to beat against the wind and gain deep sea; but when morning dawned, he saw that their fate was sealed. From the sea, the coast, towards which wind and wave remorselessly impelled the boat, appeared as one sheer wall of rock, nowhere scooped out into harbours, nowhere retreating sufficiently to allow of beach at the feet of the mighty crags. Here and there on the top of the cliffs he could distinguish towers, the belfries of storm-beaten churches, cutting the dawning eastern light. And here and there a seamark, a turret, that indicated, perhaps, the entrance to some tortuous channel cleft in the precipices, into which a boat might wriggle in calm weather, but utterly impracticable in a storm.

The base of the cliffs was everywhere hidden in foam, and the spray that was caught and

whirled about and churned up with the wind, so that nowhere could be distinguished a line of demarcation between sea and land. Water and air were shaken together into a belt of salt mist, impenetrable to the eye. Thus the head of the coast-wall stood up against the dawning light like a mountain ridge whose roots lie buried in curdy morning mists. If he could have distinguished anywhere a sandy cove, he would have run the *Bessie* towards it; but, apparently, there was nothing before her but to be dashed against upright cliffs and go to pieces in deep water.

As Richard stood considering the prospect, and thinking whether it were advisable to run for a circular tower which seemed to indicate the entrance to a port, the mate and the rest of the crew came to him and insisted on taking to the boat. There was no chance for the vessel, none possible; there was one for a small boat, which could feel the shore for a landing-place. If there were a cleft where the tower stood—then a row-boat might be run in; it was more under control than a ship. They wanted Cable to bring up his mother and children and take them along with them. The only prospect of life lay in deserting the *Bessie*.

Richard Cable heard them out, with a frown and set teeth. Then he bade them take the boat and begone. He and his would abide in the yacht and drown together in her. 'You drown your way—and I and mine will go down together our way,' he answered.

Jonas Flinders was one of the crew, and he urged Richard not to commit such a folly, that where there was a chance, he was bound to grasp it; but Richard was not to be moved. He took the wheel and signed the men away.

He watched the crew unswinging the boat, get in, and leave the *Bessie*. He watched them rowing, danced about on the waves, lashed by the spray, and then lost them in the drift. What became of them, he could not tell. It was well that they were gone. If he must die with his darlings, let them die all together, without others by.

That boat never reached the land with its load. It came ashore in chips, and the men in scraps of flesh and bone, literally sliced to pieces on the razor-like blades of slate that ran out from the cliffs into the water.

Richard noticed that a flagstaff stood on a rock near the tower, and he suspected that if there were a channel, it lay between these; but the entrance was masked by an insulated rock standing out of the water like a gigantic meal-sack. He took a piece of rope and lashed the tiller fast, so that the bows were turned directly towards the supposed entrance to a port. Then he went to the ladder leading to the cabin and descended slowly. He was in his dreadnaught, dripping with sea-water, his pilot-hat drawn over his brows, and the lappets covered his ears. When he came into the cabin, it was still dark there; only now and then, through a side-light, came a cold white gleam, and then it was blurred over by gray water. The pendent lamp, however, was still burning; but the oil was almost exhausted and the wick was much charred, so that the light it gave was not bright. It had burned all night. Mrs Cable had not slept all night;

she knew the peril, and she kept watch. Now, all the children but tiny Bessie were awake, and their grandmother was dressing and washing them. Owing to the pitch of the vessel, the operation was conducted with difficulty. Richard Cable stood at the cabin entrance, holding the posts and looking on. His mother was then combing out and smoothing on either side of her ears Mary's golden hair. Little Susie stood with her hands and face wet, asking to have them wiped. Did Mrs Cable know that they were all about to die? She thought it very likely, but she washed and dressed the children as carefully as if they were going to a school-feast. If they must go in an hour before the throne of God, they should go with their hair tidy, with white stockings and clean bibs, and Mary with the coral necklace round her throat that had belonged to her mother.

Richard looked steadily at the group, and said: 'Mother, when we strike, come on deck with all of them, and give me Bessie into my arms. You shall not drown down here, like mice in a cage.' Then with a deep frown he added: 'This also comes of her.'

'Richard,' said Mrs Cable gravely, as she bound Mary's hair behind her head, 'it is not so. Forgive her now.'

'It cannot be.' In a louder tone—'I will not.'

'What! Richard? Not when we are about to appear before the great God?'

He shook his head. 'But for her, this would not have come upon us. Our death will lie at her door; all the miseries I have suffered through her are not enough. She must kill me and mine.'

'O Richard, do not be unforgiving!'

'I thought to wipe out the curse that comes with her name, when I changed the title of the vessel; but the evil clings to us and drags us down.'

'Richard, I once had a bitter wrong done me, worse than any that has touched you; but I forgave.'

'Mother, if this brought me alone to destruction, I could freely pardon; but when it carries along with me you and all—that I love—I cannot; I will not. If I go to the judgment seat above, I will take all the seven with me and denounce her; and if there be justice in heaven, she shall suffer.' He gripped the rail as he turned and reascended the ladder, muttering as he went: 'I cannot—I will not.'

On deck again, he resumed his place at the tiller, and unlashed it. The *Bessie* was running near the meal-sack rock, at which the waves raced as in frolic, or savagely bent on throwing it over, but instead of effecting this, were themselves whirled as waterspouts high into the air. The rocks in front seemed to tower two or three hundred feet out of the sea. Above them, the sky was brightening and the clouds parting. All at once, Richard saw a fissure in the face of the cliff, a mere rift, impossible for him to strike and pass through. As easily might a man thread a needle on horseback when hunting and the hounds are in full cry. On the left of the ness crowned by the flagstaff, the wall of rock sheered away inland and the cliffs seemed to be scooped out. Cable, with a tremendous effort, wrenched the

helm hard down and brought the bowsprit with a swing round, so that the *Bessie*, instead of running into the cleft, turned, cleared the flagstaff rock, and went on the ridge of a roller into a caldron or cove north of it. He drew his hand over his eyes and wiped the spray out of them, and saw that he had dived into a semicircular bay, walled up to heaven on every side but that by which he had entered, and in which the mad waves were thundering tumultuously. One side of the cove ended seaward in a mighty black headland, that overhung, without a ledge on it where seagull could nest or samphire take root. In the lap of the bay, where the rocks were not quite so high, a waterfall leaped down, and was lost below in the spindrift that filled the air. One moment more and all would be over. He left the wheel and went to the cabin door, and called: 'Come on deck.'

Then up came the children, Mary leading the way, clinging to the rail with one hand, and with the other helping little Martha to mount the brass-laid steps. Last of all appeared Mrs Cable, carrying the baby. As each little head appeared, Richard, who knelt on one knee by the cabin hatchway, helped the child up, and put his arms round it and gave it a long embrace and kiss—the last, he thought, in this world. He said nothing; he could not speak. Bitter in his heart, bitter as the seabrine, tossed the anger against Josephine who had brought this about.

Without a word, he took the babe from his mother, and then Mrs Cable gave a hand to each of the youngest. So they stood, a little group on deck, looking at the remorseless, cruel shore, at the sweep of iron cliffs that engirdled them, about to hug them to death. Though so near, they could not see their feet, hidden in foam and spray. Around them shrieked and laughed the seamews. The wind whistled in the cordage. The water roared and hissed around.

Then Mrs Cable stooped to the children's ears and said something that Richard could not hear; but at once, above the boom of the sea and the piping of the wind, he heard the little voices raised in song:

Shall we meet beyond the river,  
Where the surges cease to roll?  
Where in all the bright For-ever,  
Sorrow ne'er shall vex the soul.

It was a song the children had learned at their Sunday school, a song of which their father was very fond, and which he had often made them warble to him. The poor, feeble, quavering voices were now out of tune and faint, with the wonder and fear that fell on them at the sight of what was before; but they knew that their song would please their father, so they girded up their faltering courage and sang as loud and strong as they could:

Shall we meet in that blessed harbour,  
When our stormy voyage is o'er?  
Shall we meet and cast the anchor  
By the far celestial shore?

And—see! above the head of the waterfall, towards which they were driving, through the rift it had sawn in the rocky wall, flashed the rising sun—it turned the head of the stream, as

it took its final leap, into liquid gold, and the river seemed to pour from the very heart of the sun, bringing fire and life and hope down into the wild, gloomy abyss below.

Shall we meet with many loved ones  
Who were torn from our embrace?

sang the little voices, and stopped—for, from out of the haze that hung between the sea and cliffs, leaped a fiery streak like a flash of lightning, and something flaring, roaring, screaming rushed over their heads; and a moment after, with a sharp crack like the report of a pistol, a rope fell athwart the deck. Those on shore had seen the wreck and had discharged a rocket over her. Richard knew at once that all was not lost. He flew to the rope and made it fast.

In another moment the vessel struck, not on a reef, but on a shingly beach, and at the same moment a great sea struck her on stern and went up in spiral whirl, like a shaving before a plane, and washed the deck. Richard seized his little ones and drew them to him. The wave passed, and none was lost. Then he gave the baby to his mother, and took up Mary in his arms; she clung round his neck, lacing her hands behind, fastening herself to him as a ferret holds to his prey. She was a shrewd child, and she knew what her father was about to do. He needed not to tell her. She put her lips to his cold wet cheek. Then he grasped the rocket rope, and went over the side with her into the boiling foam.

Whilst he was away, Mrs Cable drew the children half down the cabin ladder, where they might be safe from the seas which struck the vessel and swept the deck. Every sea drove the *Bessie* deeper into the shingle and farther up the shore; she was steady, but exposed to the full force of the waves.

Presently, from out of the leaping water, with the froth dripping from him, came Cable again, clinging to the rope, followed by two men from the shore; and the rest of the children and Mrs Cable were conveyed in safety to land. Most difficulty was found with the babe, as little *Bessie* could not be relied on to cling. She must be held in one arm, and the rope grasped with the other. Richard would let no one take her but himself, and he succeeded in bringing her through. He was now much exhausted, numbed with cold, and his limbs shook. He would not yield up the child. The danger was yet not over.

The cove into which the yacht had been run was that of Pentargon. It has a small rubbly strand, which can only be reached from the top of the cliffs by an arduous path, which, as it nears the base, passes over shale that lies upon slate-shelves steeply inclined downwards, over which moisture trickles. By this perilous way alone could the little party ascend; by this, with great difficulty, had the coastguard brought the rocket apparatus, when from the lookout they saw the little vessel driven into the cove.

The sturdy coastguardmen gave their hands to the children, to help them to ascend the steep slope over the treacherous shelf, where a fall might precipitate them over a ledge upon the shingle-beach or into the water.

'I will come last, with the baby,' said Cable. So the procession formed. Each must mount



singly, staying up a child. There was nothing to cling to; every step must be taken with precaution in the loose and sliding shale.

Richard held the smallest child well wrapped under his dreadnaught. She was awake, frightened, cold and fretful, and her sobs and impatience at being covered up harassed Richard, already spent with his watchful night and struggles through the waves with the children. He raised the flap of his coat, put down his head, and spoke soothingly to the infant. His voice usually had great effect in lulling her cries when in pain; but it was not so now. Little Bessie did not know what was going on, was drenched with sea-water, and greatly terrified. She could not understand her father, or would not be satisfied.

'It is dada who has you in his arms, Bessie,' he said with his mouth under his dreadnaught. 'Baby will soon be snug in a warm bed, and have hot milk to drink.'

But she strove fretfully in his arms to beat a way by which she might peer out of the wraps, and broke out into shrill screams of pain and anger.

Richard stood still on the shelf, to readjust her in his arms; perhaps, as he held her, her little back suffered, so he altered her position under his oilskin coat. Her cries went through his heart and unnerved him, already shaken and exhausted; cold though he was, he felt hot for a moment with distress and perturbation of spirit.

'Bessie, darling! do be still. Trust your dada a few minutes more, and all will be well!'

But hardly had the words escaped him, when the rubble under his feet slid away on the shelfy strata of slate. He fell heavily on his side. He had just presence of mind to fold both his arms round the baby, when he rolled over, and went down the slope and steps of rock. If he were hurt, he felt no pain; his whole attention was engrossed in the child he bore, his whole effort to ward it from blows with his elbows and hands.

In another moment one of the coastguardmen came down to him.

'Bessie is unhurt!' exclaimed Richard, lying among the stones.

'Any harm done?' asked the man. 'Give us a hand. Stand up, mate.'

Cable waited a moment, and moved his elbows, and then said: 'Take her. I cannot rise.'

He had dislocated his thigh.

### NETTLE-CULTURE.

Of late years, it has become necessary to avail ourselves to the utmost of all the resources of the soil in Great Britain, if we are to extricate ourselves from a state of crisis which is daily assuming a more serious aspect. At the present moment, agriculture appears to be in a state of transition. The old routine culture will have to give way to numerous innovations; and it is the duty of the practical botanist to do what he can to help the landowner out of his difficulties, by calling attention to any plants which seem likely to prove a source of revenue. Already we have heard a good deal said about the culture of maize and tobacco in England and Ireland;

and quite recently, it has been shown, by very carefully collected statistics, that flax-culture with us will yield the farmer a net profit of a guinea an acre, or, if he can accomplish the retting and scutching also, an annual profit of at least double that amount. Hemp is another fibre-yielding plant about which we hear far too little, and with which, it is probable, more might be done. Then there are a certain number of herbaceous plants, chiefly annuals, which might prove well worth cultivating as a material for paper pulp; and another series generally termed 'herbs,' which are in constant demand for culinary and medicinal purposes. We will only mention mint, lavender, chamomile, liquorice (only grown in Yorkshire, at present), gentian, rue, hyoscyamus, belladonna, &c., all of which are indigenous, and could doubtless, with proper attention, be made to yield paying crops in various parts of Great Britain and Ireland. The scientific and experimental agriculturist should now turn his attention to these and many other productions of the vegetable kingdom, capable of culture on an extensive scale in our climate, and for which there is a constant and, in many cases, ever-increasing demand in our markets.

In the present instance, we intend to say a few words upon a very humble plant, the mere mention of which may cause a smile of incredulity to arise. Some people imagine that they know all about it; others, that there is nothing worth knowing about it; while many writers have spoken of nettles being 'neglected' plants. Let us endeavour to point out the true state of the case. Before the beginning of the present century, the nettle began to attract the notice of the curious, and there is no 'neglected' plant growing on 'neglected' spots of British soil that has been oftener alluded to by botanical writers as being a 'most useful' plant to those who know how to use it. But with all this, it has never got upon the market, like belladonna, flax, or lavender, for instance; and it may be worth while to inquire into the reason of this.

There are three kinds of nettle in Great Britain, and they are known to botanists as *Urtica urens* (Small Nettle), *U. dioica* (Great Nettle), and *U. pilulifera* (Roman Nettle). The first two are common enough, and will grow anywhere, but appear to prefer localities in the neighbourhood of human habitations, or the outskirts of highly manured fields; for they require much nitrogen, either in the form of ammonia or as nitrates of potash, soda, or ammonia. Hence, nettles thrive very luxuriantly in the neighbourhood of drains and cesspits in the country, where they have good air and a soil rich in nitrogen. To the botanist, these nettles are particularly interesting, from the fact that in one of the species (*U. dioica*) the flowers are incomplete, and separated on different plants—that is, one plant has flowers with stamens only, and another flowers with pistils alone; whilst on the other species the two kinds of flowers are found, though separate, on the same individual. This circumstance would have to be taken into consideration if the *U. dioica*, or Great Nettle, should ever rank as a cultivated plant. Another point of interest is the structure and contents of the hairs of the nettle, by which they inflict a sting. These hairs are long, pointed, transparent cells, swollen out at the base, and

full of a fluid, of which the principal ingredient appears to be formic acid (so called from having first been discovered in the ant, *formica*). When the points of the hairs penetrate the skin, they break, and allow the transparent fluid to permeate the tissue, setting up a smart irritation and itching, and raising small circular tumours. These effects pass off in a couple of hours, or less, as the poison is absorbed and carried away by the circulation.

This stinging effect has frequently been taken advantage of in medicine, when it was thought advisable to produce irritation on the surface of the skin, and it has proved beneficial in allaying rheumatic pains, &c. By constant application, the system may, however, become accustomed to it, just as we find bee-keepers who no longer experience any effects from the sting of the bee. It is *U. urens* which has been chiefly employed thus, whilst *U. dioica* has been mostly used for arresting hemorrhage; and this is a very important use of the nettle. Cotton-wool steeped in the fresh juice of either kind of nettle, and introduced into the nostrils, will stop bleeding from the nose, especially if cold applications to the forehead and between the eyes are used at the same time. In cases of internal hemorrhage, the juice of the nettle has often proved most valuable. Dr Fonsagrives, a year or two ago, told us that one dessert-spoonful of the fresh juice of *U. urens* given once a day for several consecutive days proved rapidly and completely successful in a case of very severe hemorrhage, and he recommends it in all such cases. By soaking the nettle in rectified spirit for a week, and then filtering the solution, Dr Rothe, of Vienna, has obtained a hemastatic preparation, a brownish-green tincture, which possesses in a marked degree the property of arresting bleeding. The principle to which this effect is due has not yet been discovered. In fact, the chemistry of the nettle, if we may so express ourselves, is still very little known. With the exception of formic acid, which was found in the hairs by Professor Gorup-Besanez; the presence in the leaves and stalks of some yet unknown astringent principle; the yellow dye yielded by the roots when boiled with alum; and the green colour resembling the Chinese *Lo-kao*, which was obtained many years ago by Persoz and Phipson, and appears to have been known in Russia previous to the year 1824, we have scarcely any chemical data, properly so called, with regard to these remarkable plants.

However, at the beginning of the present century it was known to country-folk in Scotland that a decoction of nettles with salt forms a kind of rennet that will coagulate milk for making cheese. This property would prove useful in India, where it has been lately proposed, in certain provinces, to use for the same purpose the juice of a plant called *Withania coagulans*; for the use of common rennet is objected to, from religious motives, by the natives of India; hence, they are deprived of the useful art of cheese-making, unless they can coagulate the milk by means of some vegetable preparation. In Scotland, also, the young nettle-tops are made into a salutary pottage, as Walter Scott remarks in *Rob Roy*, a custom which is probably several centuries old. In Sweden, large crops of the Great Nettle (*U. dioica*) are grown as green fodder; it appears

to be relished by cattle, and has the advantage of being an early spring product, supplying fresh green food when there is no other to be had. In the course of the year, they get one or two more crops of nettles from the same land. When dried—by which process it loses its power of stinging—sheep and young oxen will eat it at any time of the year. A French writer says that fowls will eat the grains and the withered leaves, and that the latter are particularly good for young turkeys.

Nearly two hundred years ago, attempts were made to take advantage of the fibre of the nettle. The plant was treated like flax both in Shropshire and in certain parts of France, and manufactured into a kind of cloth. Although this has been since superseded by cotton and flax, the attempt is again about to be made in Germany, where an energetic lady has recently persuaded several agriculturists to put a certain number of acres under nettles, with the view of testing the quality of the fibre produced under the best conditions of culture. We shall await the results with some interest. Meantime, in France, while flax and hemp have long since caused nettle fibre to be discarded, the latter plant has been frequently used in paper-making.

A good deal might be written about the yellow dye from the root of the nettle, and the green material which results from a peculiar fermentation of the leaf and stalk; but, since the discovery of the coal-tar dyes, those derived from plants directly have become in almost all cases of very secondary interest. Even madder and indigo can scarcely compete with the artificial products of the chemical laboratory.

There is another point, however, in the history of the nettle that perhaps deserves some attention. It was known as early as 1820 that these plants contain nitrate of potash or saltpetre; and some writers have stated that they will only thrive where they find abundance of nitrate of potash in the soil. It is quite possible, however, that the nettle manufactures this salt from the ammonia which it derives both from the air that passes over its leaves and the water which moistens its rootlets; hence, the practical question arises, whether nettles could not be made a valuable source of saltpetre? It is a question that would be well worth investigating by those who have the means and the necessary talent at their disposal.

In spite of the culture experiments now being made in Germany, we have not much hope that nettle fibre will ever again prove a substitute for either hemp or flax in this country; the more so as another plant of the nettle tribe, known as Ramie, a Chinese vegetable belonging to the genus *Bahmeria*, which the English now call 'grass-cloth plant,' is coming very prominently forward (see *Chambers's Journal*, No. 129). There are several species of these exotic nettles in Assam, Nepal, the Sandwich Islands, and Brazil, and in all these districts they are used in the manufacture of textile fabrics. The Ramie of China is known to the natives as *Tchou-ma* (*Bahmeria nivea*), and attempts are at present being made to introduce it into France. The Chinese obtain three crops of stalks in the year. The fibre is procured by stripping off the bark in two long pieces from the full-grown plant, which is three or four feet high, scraping these pieces with a knife, to get rid of



useless matter, and then dividing the strips into fine filaments by steeping them in hot water or holding them in steam.

It remains to be seen whether or not our common nettles, submitted to appropriate culture and treatment, could be made to yield a fibre in every respect as good as that of the exotic nettle just alluded to; and if not, whether it might not prove profitable to introduce this exotic nettle into our own country—that is, into certain districts of Great Britain and Ireland where it would doubtless thrive.

## A MATTER OF CONSCIENCE.

IN THREE CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

SIX o'clock on a November morning at Tynemouth. All night a heavy gale had blown from the east, driving before it the cold gray waves of the North Sea, and piling them upon the bare coast of Northumberland. Their foam flew up over the low cliffs, and mingled with the chilly sleet, dashed against the windows of the houses built on the verge, making every separate pane of glass rattle in its fastenings. A bleak morning truly, and one on which even the stern medical professors, who are so fond of warning us against the comforts of life and their enjoyment, could not but have allowed that, till daybreak at least, bed was the best place for a tired man. So thought Dr John Wynyard, as he half awoke from his sleep, heard the noise of the wind and rain with a feeling of blissful enjoyment of the contrast, and turned on his pillow, to fall anew into that morning slumber which is the most enjoyable of all.

But the thought of the wild weather without had entered the secret chambers of his brain and set him dreaming. In his dream it seemed to him that he rose and looked out of the window towards the old priory and its wave-worn peninsula of rock; and there he saw a strange sight—a gravestone was approaching the edge of the cliff with a slow, stately, gliding motion. Not a pause it made, but continued its course down the slope and into the foaming caldron of water that boiled beneath. Another and another followed. It seemed as though the whole of those sad memorials had grown tired at last of standing in the cemetery, recording on their faces the false praises of the dead, which kindly hands had graved upon them, but which were none the less lies. 'Faithful and loving wife'—'Tender husband and father'—'Dear and only child.' It was all very well to say so, when they were gone; but would any have said such words of them while they lived? Here, in dreamland, where all things are possible, it seemed scarcely strange that the very stones should have rebelled at last, and be ready to hide themselves for ever under the ocean. A wild strain of music seemed to keep time to their stately march towards oblivion, rising and falling, as though the storm played upon the strings of a great Æolian harp.

'I wonder if any stones will be left—if even one bears a true inscription?' Wynyard thought, and woke, the question remaining unsolved.

As his senses came back to him, he became aware of the unpleasant fact that the sound which his sleeping imagination had exalted into music

was merely a persistent whistling from the speaking-tube which terminated in the wall close to the head of his bed. Evidently, he was wanted; and the idea of turning out breakfastless into the howling storm that still raged without, was not a pleasant one. However, with a sigh of resignation, he withdrew the wooden stopper from the tube and called down it to know what was the matter.

'Captain Brock, of Cullercoats, seriously ill; wants to see you at once—carriage waiting for you at the door,' were the words he heard. The doctor promptly jumped out of bed, and prepared to dress himself with as little delay as possible, after shouting down the tube that he would be ready immediately.

'They must have sent a sensible man for once,' he mused, as he fumbled at his collar stud, which was always slipping out of its proper place. 'Some fellows would have insisted on giving me a complete history of the whole business from beginning to end.—But what on earth can Captain Brock want with me? I have not been attending him, and Cullercoats is not in my practice. It may be a good opening for me, perhaps. Who knows? I have not done so well here that I can afford to throw away any chance that offers.'

Being a thoroughly practical man, he thought no more of his dream, by which a more imaginative mind might have been impressed, but hurried on his clothes, and in ten minutes from the time of the summons was in the carriage and driving along the cliff towards Cullercoats, a little village within a mile of Tynemouth.

Captain Brock's residence was a semi-detached house, forming part of a terrace which was in rapid process of construction, the builders having hopes that they would succeed in due time in making Cullercoats the watering-place for the north, in place of Tynemouth, where the visitors found the cloud of smoke that drifted over land and sea when the wind blew down the Tyne, a great drawback to their enjoyment. Wynyard lived in a very similar house himself; but in his case it was from sheer necessity; and he wondered, as he entered the hall and saw the painful newness of everything, that any man of private means should care to settle down in such a dwelling.

It was still dark, and the dawn had only just begun to break as he entered the house. Gas had not yet been laid on in the new terrace; but its want was supplied by a large bronze lamp which stood on a pedestal in the hall, and by its light the doctor saw that some one was there to receive him. It was a girl of some twenty years of age, clad in a close-fitting gown of blue serge, relieved only by a gleam of white linen at wrists and throat, and by a simple though valuable brooch, which fastened it at the neck—a single large opal set in a thin rim of plain gold. Her figure was decidedly beautiful; but so much could not be said for her face, which was spoiled by the heaviness of the lower part, chiefly caused by the squareness of the jaw and chin. However, if not beautiful, it was eminently a good face and a pleasant one; and the doctor, who was no mean judge of physiognomy, thought he had rarely seen a countenance more to be trusted. She bowed slightly to him as he entered, and said, coldly enough, yet with a ring of feeling in her voice

which showed that she was repressing some emotion: 'You are Dr Wynyard, I suppose? Will you kindly come up-stairs? My father is very anxious to see you at once.'

Wynyard bowed, and followed her, asking as he went, how Captain Brock was and what was the matter with him; to neither of which questions did he obtain a very satisfactory answer from the lady, who seemed unwilling to say more than she could avoid.

Captain Brock's chamber presented the scene that all doctors know so well, when a man is taken suddenly ill. The Tynemouth lawyer stood beside the bed with a bundle of papers in his hand. An old woman, called in to assist in the nursing, was making up anew the expiring fire in the hearth; and on the pillow lay a white face with bushy black beard, the eyes closed, and the breath coming in gasps from the pale lips.

At the noise of the opening door the lawyer looked round, and the sick man opened his eyes. Dr Wynyard approached the bed and prepared to feel the pulse of his patient; but the latter made a motion of dissent. 'That will come later, doctor,' he said slowly and painfully. 'You cannot do me much good now in your medical capacity; but as a man you can. Come nearer and let me have a good look at you.'

Wynyard obeyed; and the sick man gazed into his face for a while with an intensity that in any other circumstances would have approached madness.

'He will do!' Captain Brock muttered, half audibly. 'A good face—just such a one as I expected him to have.—Doctor, I want a few words alone with you.'

The other occupants of the room went out at this, and Wynyard was left alone with the dying man; for dying he was, as the doctor's experience told him.

'Lock the door,' said Captain Brock. When he saw that this was done, he put his hand under his pillow and drew out a long parchment envelope, holding some thick document, and laid it on the table beside him. 'Dr Wynyard,' he said, 'I am going to ask a great favour of you—greater than any man has a right to require of a stranger. But I know you, and I have studied your face and your life, and I believe you to be an honest and upright gentleman, who will not mind trouble for a good object, and will espouse the cause of the fatherless. Am I not right?'

'I hope so,' said the doctor simply.

'Well!—I have no relations living except my daughter, and no friends either,' said the captain, with some bitterness. 'I am only the retired master of a merchant vessel, as no doubt you know; but I have saved enough money to keep Mary from starving at all events; so, even if you fail in the work I want you to undertake, no very great harm will be done; still'—His voice failed him a little, and he reached over to the table for a cup standing there.

Wynyard smelt the liquid it contained and shook his head, but passed it to him. He drank eagerly, and seemed revived by the act.

'Dr Wynyard, I have made you executor of my will, and trustee for my daughter till she come of age. You will hear all about that when the will is read. Promise me that you will accept the trust. It is a dying man that asks you.'

'But surely you might have found some one more competent than I am to undertake it,' said Wynyard, rather dismayed at the prospect before him. 'I assure you I know nothing whatever of business.'

'So much the better, sir—so much the better. You can be trusted, and that is all I want. But I know you will not fail me.—Here is a sealed letter that I want you to take at once; but do not open it till after the will is read. It will give you full instructions as to the work I want you to do. You shall not be the loser, sir.'

His voice had been growing weaker as the influence of the stimulant he had taken left him, and now he sank back on the pillow, livid and breathless, but pointing to the paper that lay on the table. Wynyard took it up and put it in the breast of his coat. The dying man gave him an eloquent look of thanks, and then relapsed into the state of torpor which is the last symptom of that terrible disease, inflammation of the lungs. Wynyard hastened to do what he could for him; but the case was hopeless, as he had known long before. Captain Brock never spoke again in this world.

Wynyard, with the lawyer's assistance, gave what directions were necessary for the funeral and the care of the house for the next few days, as Miss Brock was quite incapacitated from attending to such matters. She did not weep or show violent emotion; but the doctor knew well what her pale face and compressed lips meant, and pitied her all the more for her gallant effort to hide her feelings from strangers. He knew that sorrow would find its natural relief in tears when she was alone again, and hastened his departure as much as he could—a delicacy of feeling which the girl fully appreciated, and was grateful for in her own shy way.

Like a sensible man of the world, Dr Wynyard determined to keep his mind as clear as possible of Captain Brock's business until he should be able, after the funeral, to see what was in reality required of him. Nevertheless, it must be owned that his mind was not altogether free from misgivings as to his very delicate position of trustee to a young lady of twenty years of age. However, trustee did not necessarily imply guardian, and he hoped that the old captain had seen the necessity for appointing some sober matron to act in the latter capacity. Meanwhile, he thought it kinder not to disturb Miss Brock in her first grief, knowing that all possible arrangements had been made for her comfort so far as the present was concerned.

It was a clear frosty day when the funeral procession wended its way along the cliff and through the castle gate to the old priory cemetery. Procession we have called it; but perhaps that may be too grandiloquent a word to use when speaking of the little knot of mourners who followed the body of the old captain to its last resting-place. His words as to his loneliness in the world seemed true enough, for no relatives had come to attend the funeral or hear the will read. Miss Brock, somewhat in defiance of the custom of the place, was present at the ceremony, and from underneath her thick crape veil, a tear or two rolled down, which made, as Wynyard thought, remembering his dream, a better epitaph after all than any carved in stone; showing as

they did that the dead was at least regretted by one person on earth; and that, after all, is something.

After the funeral, the clergyman, lawyer, and doctor, with Miss Brock and the servants of the household, met in the parlour of the dead man's house to hear the will read. The newness of everything, furniture, house, and fittings, seemed sad in its strangeness of contrast with the duty on hand, and the girl clearly felt it so. Wynyard watched her pityingly as the lawyer read the long preamble of the will, knowing that his attention would not be much needed till the enumeration of the captain's worldly goods was over. At length came the gist of the document, and he listened with all his ears:

'And all the above personal property, of every nature whatsoever, I bequeath to John Wynyard, Esq., Doctor of Medicine, of Tynemouth, Northumberland, in trust for my only daughter, Mary Brock, till the said Mary Brock shall reach the age of twenty-one years, when she shall come into personal possession of the same. And I appoint the said John Wynyard guardian of this my daughter; and do will that he expend what money he considers suitable in providing for her subsistence and education during her minority; and for his trouble in the matter I give and bequeath to the said John Wynyard the sum of One Thousand Pounds, free of legacy duty.

'And I hereby request the said John Wynyard forthwith to sell out all stocks, bonds, and other securities standing in my name, and to invest the money realised by the sale of the same in the shares of a certain Company, the name whereof is duly shown in a paper signed by me in the presence of witnesses and handed over to the said John Wynyard. And no impeachment shall lie against the said John Wynyard for any loss arising from the aforesaid investment,' &c.

'A most extraordinary will, Dr Wynyard!' said the lawyer, as he folded up the document slowly. 'I am not at all sure that it would stand, if any one chose to contest it. He sent for me the night he died, to read it over, to give him my opinion upon it, which I did pretty freely—but to no effect. I suppose you are going to act, and that you have got the document he speaks of.'

'Yes,' answered Wynyard to both questions. 'But I foresee that I shall have to ask your advice, Mr Walker, as I really know nothing about business.'

'Very well,' said the lawyer. 'You will always find me at home from ten to one; and when you come, don't forget to bring your document with you. A great deal may turn upon that.—Good-bye, Miss Brock. I will leave you to talk over matters with your trustee.' And he lifted his black bag and hat from the table and left the room, followed at once by the clergyman and the servants—the latter in high good-humour, having been mentioned in their master's will for small sums, in spite of their short service with him. Wynyard and Miss Brock were left alone in the parlour.

The situation was decidedly an awkward one, and the young doctor had no idea how he should begin the necessary conversation. The girl, however, saved him the trouble. She raised her veil, and looked steadily at him for a moment, and then spoke in a voice not altogether free from

tremor: 'Do I understand, Dr Wynyard, that you are appointed my only guardian?' She did not emphasise the word 'only'; but the direction of her thoughts was evident, and Wynyard hastened to answer.

'Your only legal guardian, Miss Brock.—But I have full liberty to use as much of your money as you may require in providing you with a suitable home and congenial society. Would you mind telling me what your plans are for the future?'

'I have none,' said the girl slowly. 'I do not think I have a relative living. I was brought up in a convent at Brussels while my father was at sea, and scarcely saw him except in very brief visits, till he retired from the service six months ago and brought me here.—Where do you think I had best go now? I could not live here by myself—could I?'

'Not well,' said Wynyard, looking perplexed. 'I suppose you would not care to go back to the convent for a year?'

'Not if it can be helped,' said the girl, with a quick contraction of her brows. 'I was not happy there.'

'Well,' Wynyard said, as a sudden thought struck him, 'perhaps you had better stay here for a day or two, and I will try to make arrangements.'

'I am afraid I and my affairs will be a great trouble to you,' she said, with a little pitiful smile, which made the doctor's heart go out to her in sympathy. 'I will do anything you think best; and—here she hesitated, and a blush covered her forehead—'could you let me have a little money if I am to stay here? There are some bills due to the tradesmen, and one of them came this morning and was troublesome because I could not pay him.'

'What was his name?' asked Wynyard quietly. 'Oh! Heaton the butcher.—But I will pay him myself, if you give me the money; you need not trouble to do it.'

'I will pay him myself,' said Wynyard; 'you can pay the others if you wish.' And he opened his purse, and produced a number of sovereigns therefrom and laid them on the table with a keen sense of the absurdity of the situation.

'Thank you,' said the girl simply. 'I will keep a careful account. There is more there than I shall want, I am sure.'

'I hope it will not be many days before I can bring you certain news,' said Wynyard, shaking hands with her. 'Meanwhile, if you have any difficulty and want advice, write me a note. Here is my address.' And handing her one of his cards, he left the room.

#### WISE SAWS AND MODERN INSTANCES.

THE good old-fashioned days of agriculture are gone, and the old order has given place to a new, and may be one more go-ahead, but less money-making; yet, for all this, the annals of our ancestral heroes of the soil, of their mode of life and simple faith, will never be lost. In a pursuit like that of farming, so completely dependent upon the weather, that even now, with such powerful allies as steam and ensilage, a few tempestuous hours are sufficient to mar or defer the work of weeks, there is a strange sameness of



yearly routine in the operations of ploughing, sowing, feeding, mowing; and all radiating, in bright or sombre degrees of success, from their common centre, the weather. There can be little wonder, then, if past generations of the inhabitants of our more purely agricultural districts have given more than mere passing attention to meteorological observations; and we have, accordingly, the result of their constant notings down of fitting times and seasons, of portents, warnings, and homely saws, in the numerous doggerel verses which have been handed down from generation to generation, and which are still familiar to many of us. Of these rhymes, many possess reason; others are mysterious until closely studied, when they will be found to teem with both meaning and wisdom. Others there are, lacking both these last-named attributes; but these are the exception. While, on the other hand, nearly all are too full of rustic simplicity, or of that sublime faith in the ways of providence, so long the ornament of our peasantry, to be allowed to lapse into oblivion.

Some English counties are especially noticeable for their numerous homely or weatherwise proverbs—perhaps the more prominent being the eastern counties; while Leicester, Derby, and Cambridgeshire are also most prolific of them—the last-named county probably occupying the premier position among all others. Necessarily, many of these old saws relate to the cultivation of corn; and it was ever thus; for many a line of Virgil's *Georgics* is nothing more or less than an agricultural proverb treated in that tuneful method so peculiarly his own. Doubtless, readers of this poet's minor work can easily call to memory adages quite as forcibly expressed as the following:

Drunk or sober,  
Sow wheat in October.

Or:

When the oak is gosling gray,  
Sow your barley night and day.  
But when the blackthorn's white as a sheet,  
Sow your barley dry or wet.

At this last juncture, it becomes imperative to hasten such operations.

Now that we have touched upon some of those relating to corn-lore, it may be well to continue such sayings.

Some of the different rules for seeding-time are put forward in the subjoined forms—such as:

Sow wheat in the slop,  
And 'twill be heavy at top.  
Sow beans in the mud,  
And they'll come up like a wood.

To this a rider is appended:

But sow  
One for the mouse, one for the crow,  
One to rot, and one to grow.

A very forcible reminder is that which tells us that

Peas and beans should be so thin  
That a ewe and her lamb may lie between.

This is, however, going a little too far to be reliable.

We next come to one of those which we have described as possessing both rhyme and reason, for, with reference to one of the pulses just mentioned, it is said that

If on Candlemas day the thorns hang a drop,  
Then you are sure of a good pea-crop.

On consideration, we shall find that the salt haze of a fog, which at times prevails along our eastern coast, is most beneficial to the seed, acting as a manure upon it.

Barley is now pronounced by judges to be the English farmer's main crop. Accordingly, we are warned that if we

Sow barley in wet,  
But little we'll get;  
But sow it in dust,  
And our barns will bust.

For barley, being by nature a seed which quickly germinates, when retarded in its growth by stiff damp soil, is sure to rot in large quantities.

By the assertion that 'a bright Christmas brings a light wheat-sheaf,' may be meant the possibility of a very clear frosty time at that date proving too severe even for this hardy plant. From Kent comes a hopper's ditty:

First the flea, and then the fly,  
Then the louse, and then they die.

If we remember aright, this was quoted in the course of the hop duty sessions in parliament 1861. The correct season for oat-sowing is duly chronicled:

He who would fill his pouch with groats,  
In Januair must sow his oats.

Our three next distichs hail respectively from Derby, Cambridgeshire, and Norfolk:

When the cornerake begins to crow,  
Then your hay is fit to mow.

A wet May and showery June  
Bring all crops into tune.

When the dow [pigeon] doth croak,  
The winter is broke.

These, and many like them, are more or less memoranda on the subject of corn-culture; but there are in addition many general morals bearing upon rural thrift and industry, in the shape of such sound rules as—

If you would wish the world to win,  
Keep neither howling dog nor crowing hen;

for, to thrive, one ought never to keep anything—or do anything—which is at once useless to one's self and annoying to neighbours. It is now more than ever necessary that

The farmer should have on Candlemas day  
Half his turnips and half his hay;

for with the grazing of stock alone to fall back upon, at present corn prices, it is desirable to keep a fair quantity of stock during the long spring months.

We opine that the well-known,

When the wind is still,  
The weather is never ill,

only holds good for a portion of the community; for, in the flooded Fen districts, drained largely

by windmills, a good breeze is looked upon as a blessing. The saying must have originated in some dry upland corner.

Melancholy truth tells us that,

When cockle's mixed in wheaten corn,  
And spurred is the rye,  
Though many in that year be born,  
More in their graves will lie.

The growths mentioned are to be seen in a very wet and cold season—like those of 1877-1879—bad alike for corn and man. 'Spurred rye' means the black excrescence from the ear, producing the drug 'ergot.' This, when ground, of course impregnates the meal with an infinitesimal portion of poison.

We are told that there are different degrees of proficiency even in the henwife's task :

On Candlemas day, the good housewife's geese lay ;  
On Valentine—yours and mine.

As the advent of the cuckoo finds the season backward or forward, so will the prospects of keep for stock, and probable rise or fall in prices of corn, vary ; so that,

If the cuckoo lights on the bare thorn,  
Sell your sheep and keep your corn ;  
But, when he lights on the blooming hip,  
Sell your corn and keep your sheep.

Amid all the hard work entailed on agriculturists, we learn that there will come a time of jubilee, since

He that would thrive  
Must rise at five ;  
He that hath thriven  
May rise at seven.

Housekeepers ought to bear in mind this sound maxim when making provision for Christmas fare :

On St Thomas the divine,  
Kill turkeys, geese, and swine.

St Thomas's day is the 21st of December.—Now for a little advice as to furrowing, fuelling, and the avoidance of spring illnesses :

Plough deep while sluggards sleep,  
And you 'll have corn to sell and keep.  
Burn ashwood green,  
'Tis a fire for a queen ;  
But, burn it sear,  
And 'twill make you swear.

Ere May be out, cast not a clout—

that is, doff no thick winter clothing. A solemn note of warning is struck in quoting :

March will sarch ye ; April will try ;  
May will tell ye whether ye 'll live or die.

In short, there are no end of these amusing reminders ; but we must finish our imperfect sketch with three, quoted respectively for the felicity of the would-be weatherwise, the non-abstainers, and, lastly, for the ladies, namely—

Bright-tailed rain makes fools fain—

that is, rain succeeded by sunshine deceives the non-observant into the belief that instead of a renewal of the shower, there will be fine weather.

He who would keep his father's lands,  
Must wash his throat before his hands.

The extent of the potatoes being thus limited by

personal cleanliness. Lastly, there is annual testimony to the fact that

March winds and May sun  
Make linen white and fair maids dun.

### A TALE OF THE GALTEE MOUNTAINS.

IN the early part of the year 1867, I was travelling on business in the south of Ireland, and one evening found myself in a small town on the borders of the counties of Cork and Tipperary. The country was just then very unsettled, and the trading classes uneasy, the wildest rumours being afloat respecting the impending Fenian insurrection. The telegraph wires between Dublin and the south were cut ; the insurgents were in possession of Cork and Limerick ; shiploads of men were on their way from England and America to aid the rebels—such were some of the *canards* that spread alarm through the district in which I then was.

I believed only a small portion of these reports, but enough to make me uncomfortable ; and I determined to return to England at once. There was no vehicle to be obtained, police officials and newspaper correspondents having hired them all ; but as my host promised to send on my luggage in a day or two, I did not hesitate to face on foot the distance between my inn and the nearest railway station, which, by a cut across the hills, was, I was assured, only four miles away. I set off, then, on the morning of, I think, the 5th of March. The sky was overcast, and a keen east wind made my ears and cheeks tingle. The half-clad *gossoon* who served me as guide for a part of the way trotted at my side, his hands thrust into his pockets, his neck and bosom bare, his trousers admitting the air by a score of rents. He had quite a budget of intelligence about the 'boys,' as the Fenians were popularly designated, and dwelt with pride on the fact that he knew many of them. Were they dangerous?—'O no !' he replied, laughing at the question. 'Tis only polis an' sojers they'd shoot ; they won't harm any one else.'

With this grain of consolation, I parted from my guide at the foot of the Galtee Mountains, and climbed the narrow pathway which he called a 'road.' Little round stones slipped and rolled beneath my feet ; in some places the path passed by the brink of depths where a fall would certainly be fatal ; in others, it crossed the side of steep slopes where it was difficult to maintain an erect position. At length I reached the top, and congratulated myself on having accomplished the most difficult part of my journey.

Far below, the path could be seen winding like a gray thread. As my guide said, I could not miss it. Snow now began to fall, slowly, softly, silently, shutting out the plain, and gradually narrowing my horizon, until I could only see a few yards around me. The path was soon obliterated, and the ground became slippery. However, feeling sure that I knew the general direction of

the road, I went forward confidently. But it gradually dawned upon me that I had lost my way, and I looked anxiously round for some sign of human life.

I lingered on for some time, now plunging into a pit filled with snow, now stumbling over some hidden stone, and at length, when almost exhausted, reached a cabin, where I resolved to seek shelter. Standing near the head of a steep glen, the house rested against the side of a cliff, which sheltered it, while helping to support the wooden roof. Though the cottage was diminutive, it looked clean in its fresh coat of whitewash; and a slender column of smoke suggested warmth and food.

In reply to my knock, a woman of about fifty opened the door and bade me enter. She was tall, with good features, and an air almost of refinement. Her black cap and dress were fresh and neat; her manner was reserved, though kindly, and the house was as clean as such a dwelling could be. But in the damp earthen floor and walls, in the meagre furniture and the woman's deeply lined face, there was evidence of poverty and care. I told her my story, and begged permission to rest for a while.

'An' welcome, sir,' she said, drawing to the fire a rush-bottomed chair and desiring me to be seated. 'I am sorry, sir, that I have little to offer you to ate, but'—

I hastened to assure her that I was well supplied; and emptying my haversack on the table, showed that dearth of food was not likely to cause me anxiety. It turned out that I was only three miles from the railway station, to which a good road led; and my mind being relieved on this point, I proceeded to make myself comfortable. We talked of the insurrection; and she was much put out when I spoke of the rebels' defeat as certain.

'Thin you don't think the boys will win, sir?'

'Impossible,' I exclaimed. 'They are madmen to attempt it.'

'I suppose you're right, sir,' she sighed. 'This is the second risin' I've seen—me poor husband was out in '48—an' no good can come o' um. Poor lads, to throw away their lives so foolishly.—What's that?' she asked suddenly; and seeing her strain her ears, I too listened, and heard a dull tramp and the confused sound of many voices. My hostess sprang up, filled with animation, and hastened to the door, saying: 'Tis some o' the boys!'

About a score of men were scaling the height before the cabin; and when they neared the woman, she addressed them in Irish: 'How goes the cause?'

'Badly, missus,' one of the foremost replied. 'The game is up, an' I daresay the sojers is at our heels.'

The party advanced stragglingly, and entered the house without ceremony. All appeared to be of the humbler classes—small farmers, labourers, artisans—and were miserably armed. There were a few revolvers and rifles among them; but old

muskets, swords, even scythes tied to staffs formed the bulk of their weapons. Their leader wore a red sash and sword-belt outside a green uniform, and above his hat a large plume waved. He was a handsome soldier-like man, and seemed worthy of a better command. In the rear, one of their number was borne on hurdles.

When the men saw me, they stopped, and questioned the hostess suspiciously. A few words sufficed to satisfy them, and they proceeded to make themselves at home. A heap of peat that stood beside the hearth was thrown upon the fire, and a bright blaze soon danced in the chimney, and lit up the forms of the men, who, crowded as closely as possible, sat or lay around the fire. The woman of the house was activity itself. She filled a large pot with potatoes, and set them to cook, afterwards spreading on a table her little store of eatables. Then she attended to the person who was injured. He was a low-sized, slender lad of fourteen or fifteen, who now lay on the only bed of which the cottage boasted. His face was pale, and his features were distorted in an effort to suppress the cry of agony that rose to his lips. The lad's pain arose from a sprained ankle; and when the foot was relieved from the pressure of the boot and wrapped in wet flannels, the boy uttered a sigh of relief.

The majority were a rough wild lot; but I was interested by their chief and by this boy. The former sat apart, his dark handsome face wrapped in gloom, his hands toying with the knot of his sash, while he looked thoughtfully at the ground. The boy was apparently ignorant of the oaths and jests around him; eye and ear were on the alert, his glance being fixed on the window, through which he commanded a view of the high ground outside.

I soon found that I was the subject of conversation between two or three of the party, one of them, a tall, burly, black-browed ruffian eyeing me in no friendly manner. 'Where may you be from, stranger?' he asked.

'London,' I replied briefly.

'I told you so,' he said, turning to his comrades. 'I knew he was a Sassenach, an' curse me if he stays under the same roof as us!'

'You're right, be jabers!' cried another. 'We'll have no Saxon spies here!'

I must own to having felt uncomfortable, and I said in as conciliatory a tone as possible: 'Gentlemen, if my presence is objectionable, I shall leave.'

'How polite you are,' said the first speaker, with an oath. 'Lave you to go and tell where we've gone? Not likely.—Look here, boys; suppose we tie him up and throw him into the pigsty? It will be good enough lodgings for the English baste.'

I sprang to my feet, seeing the fellows about to carry out the proposal; and fearing that their violence might proceed to fatal lengths, I snatched up a sword that one of them had laid aside, and said that whoever approached me would do so at his own risk.

The leading ruffian grinned, and quietly pointing a musket at me, said: 'Put down that sword before I say three. One, two'—

'Lower your weapon, sir!' came like a trumpet-blast from the corner where their chief sat. Up to that moment he seemed ignorant of what



passed around, but he now stood erect, his eyes flashing indignantly. 'Leave that man alone,' he continued; 'we are not murderers.'

'Oh, begorra!' the other replied, 'we're all captains now, an' there's no masher here.' He again pointed his gun at me, which he had for a moment lowered.

'You scoundrel,' the leader rejoined, 'you'll be in the dock soon, and will have enough to answer for without adding to it the blood of an innocent man.'

The eyes of all were fixed on my assailant. Those who formerly encouraged him, less ruffianly or less daring, fell back on hearing their captain's voice; but this one appeared quite unmoved. The woman of the house sat in a corner, her apron thrown over her head, in order to shut out the bloody scene that was, she believed, imminent. The lad looked on with dilated eyes, his lips parted, and his breathing almost suspended. I mechanically clutched the sword, and kept my eyes fastened on the trigger of the musket, which the man's finger pressed.

'Put down the sword,' he repeated, in a low hoarse voice. 'One—two—'

I closed my eyes and muttered a prayer. For an instant I hesitated whether to comply or to make a dash for the door. A loud report nearly deafened me; there was a scream; and on opening my eyes, I saw my assailant dancing about the room, swearing furiously, and nursing his right hand, from which blood poured. The leader stood looking sternly at his wounded follower; and the sight of a revolver, still smoking, in his hand told me to whom I owed my life. There was not a murmur heard, even the ruffian whose murderous designs were frustrated, after the first outburst, writhed in silence.

'My good woman,' said the chief calmly, 'perhaps you will be kind enough to give that rascal some old linen and help him to bandage his hand.'

While my hostess was engaged on this task, two of the men who had been placed as sentinels outside rushed in. 'The redcoats are comin'!' they cried. 'There's cavalry there too, an' some o' the boys are runnin' this way.'

In an instant all was wild confusion. With a cry of alarm, my would-be murderer fled, completing the wrapping of his wounded limb while running. He was followed by several others. 'Strain the praties!' cried some of those who remained; and before many seconds, the huge pot was taken from the fire, the water drained off, and the half-cooked potatoes divided among the hungry rebels, who thrust them into their pockets and hats, burning their hands, and dancing with pain. The chief was the last to leave the house, after committing the boy to the woman's charge. While he divested himself of his plume and sash, and put on a large overcoat that one of his followers left behind, I thanked him for his timely intervention on my behalf.

'Pray, do not mention it,' he said with a pleasant smile. 'Had I stood by quietly, I should have been as great a villain as the other. —Farewell!'

The lad was terribly frightened. 'Oh!' he sobbed, 'if I could only run! But I can't, an' they'll catch me an' hang me.'

My hostess was hardly recovered from the

stupor into which she was thrown by my peril, and she now looked around with dull eyes.

'Can we do nothing to save this poor boy?' I asked. — 'Why not say he is your son?'

'Of coorse, of coorse!' she answered, her face lighting up with intelligence. — 'Rest aisy, darlin', she continued; 'no wan'll hurt a hair o' yer head.'

I corroborated this, and the boy was comforted.

'Why did you join those men?' I asked.

'Me father was with 'um, sir.'

'Is he killed?' I went on.

'No, sir; oh, no!' the lad replied with a look of alarm; 'but we lost wan another.'

'What's yer name, *alaunnah*?' inquired the woman.

'Patsy Ryan, ma'am.'

Her face became dark, and she started back from the bed, over which she had been leaning, asking in a cold hard voice: 'Where d'ye come from, good boy?'

'From Tulla, ma'am, three miles th'other side o' Doneraile,' the lad answered, puzzled by the change in her manner.

'Is foxy Pad Ryan yer father?' she almost screamed.

'Yes, ma'am,' was the faltering reply.

The woman became frantic. 'Cursed brood!' she shrieked, 'that brought nothin' to me an' mine but misfortune! Whelp of a vagabone assassin an' parjured informer, come till I give ye to the polis, an' put ye in a fair way o' bein' hanged!'

She seized the boy by the shoulders, and before he could resist, dragged him from the bed, and they struggled together for a moment on the floor. I raised the woman and drew her away, remonstrating and entreating meanwhile. She turned on me like a fury, and snatching up an axe that stood behind the door, rushed towards me, wielding the weapon, while her eyes flashed and her lips quivered.

'Don't come between me an' me revings!' she cried. 'D'ye know who led me husband into crime, an' falsely swore him to the gallows, who broke me heart an' ruined me life? I'll tell ye—foxy Pad Ryan. An' whin I have his son here in me power, who'll say I mustn't have blood for blood?—I followed me darlin' Dan to Cork jail, an' saw him brought out tied with ropes, an' thin they strangled him to death. An' whin I come home, I found me baby dead from cowl'd an' hunger; an' I knelt down an' prayed that the curse of all the saints might attend the villin who brought the desolation on me house.—An' here's his son, an' I'll felly him to the gallows too!'

Exhausted by passion, she dropped into a chair, still holding the axe, and looking threateningly on the boy, who had crept back to bed, and now lay gazing in terror at the woman. We heard voices outside, and all three turned towards the window. The snow had ceased, the air was clear, and the sun shone coldly on the white-robed hills, while an icy wind moaned through the glen. 'My father!' cried the boy joyfully.

A group of men were crouched on a hillock outside the house, and after glancing down the slope, they simultaneously levelled their guns and fired. With one exception, they then turned and ran. He who remained was a tall sinewy man,

with a slouched hat and a long gray overcoat, outside which a belt was fastened. His hair and whiskers were reddish, and he had a yellow, wrinkled, hawk-like face, that was singularly repulsive. He stayed to watch the effect of his shot, then springing to his feet, uttered a shrill whoop, brandished his gun, and was about to follow his comrades, when the whistle of bullets passed the cottage, and after bounding upward, the man fell on his back in the snow, and lay motionless, his arms outstretched.

My hostess, her face pressed against the window, looked on breathlessly; and when the man fell, she dropped on her knees, and with uplifted hands, cried, in an agitated voice: 'God pardon me, for a poor wicked creature, who forgot that her cause was in His hands when I sought the life of an innocent *gossoon*!' She staggered to the bed, and throwing herself across the boy's feet, sobbed hysterically. He, divided between sorrow for his father and anxiety for himself, after one sad wail of 'Daddy! daddy!' sat pale and trembling.

The wind brought to us the dull sound of horses' hoofs, and a troop of lancers came trotting up the glen by twos, the sunlight glancing from the points of their spears. Behind, at a slower pace, two or three companies of infantry climbed the rugged path. The whole force was drawn up on the level space before the door, and an officer, attended by a couple of soldiers, entered.

The poor woman was too agitated to answer his inquiries, and I undertook to satisfy him about the passage of the rebels and my own identity.

'Who is this young man, madam?' he asked, referring to the boy, who, on finding himself observed, shrank back in the bed.

'Me son, capten—me only boy, yer honour.—Don't be afraid, Patsy darlin'; the han'some gintleman won't do anythin' to ye.'

'Is the poor lad ill?' the officer asked sympathetically.

'No, sir; no, yer honour; but the boys—the Faynians, I mane, sir—frightened him, an' runnin' home, he turned his ankle benathe him. That's all, capten, sir.'

The soldiers departed, and I soon followed, leaving the boy bemoaning the loss of his only relative, whose body the troops carried with them, while the woman tried to console him.

I arrived in London without further incident.

Business took me again into that neighbourhood some years afterwards, and as the weather was fine, I made an excursion to the scene of the adventure I have related. The place was easily found, and I was agreeably surprised by the changes that had taken place. Patsy Ryan was still with the widow, whose desire for vengeance had collapsed on the death of the boy's father. He was married, and had three sturdy children, who called the old lady 'grannie.' The little cottage was replaced by a substantial house; the rugged waste that formerly ran downward from the door, was now cultivated and fenced in with the stones that Patsy dug from his land; a couple of cows grazed lower down; and pigs, ducks, and geese roamed about at will.

Nothing could exceed the tenderness shown by the old lady and her adopted son towards one

another; and as I sat before the hearth, surrounded by the family, I could not help contrasting the comfort and peace that now reigned there, with the poverty, the misery, the fierce passions that I saw on my former visit.

#### THE EGG QUESTION AGAIN.

At a recent meeting of the Balloon Society, a paper was read, by Mr Charles E. Hearson, on the Embryology of a Chicken, in which he gave a sketch of the progress of artificial incubation from the time of Réaumur to the present day. Major Leslie moved a resolution to the effect that, in the opinion of that meeting, the enormous increase in the importation of foreign eggs into this country should draw attention to the necessity of developing the home supply both by natural and artificial means. As one of the largest land-owners in the county of Monaghan, he was pleased to find this Society calling attention to an essential Irish home industry. Ireland was at that moment sending more eggs to this country than ever it did. Mr W. H. Le Fevre, C.E., stated that the following sums were paid for eggs imported into the United Kingdom in 1886: From Germany, £743,618; from Belgium, £653,784; from France, £1,215,360; from other countries, £266,280: total, £2,879,042. He believed that in Ireland alone a sufficient quantity of eggs could be produced to supply the whole of the United Kingdom. If a portion of the sum we now pay France, Germany, and other countries were remitted to Ireland in exchange for that commodity, it would go some way to improve its condition. Fortunately, science was coming to our assistance in effecting improvements in incubation for hatching chickens. As a native of the Channel Islands, he remembered the time when the South-Western Railway had considerable difficulty in filling three steamers per week with produce from the Channel Islands and the coast of Normandy. They now had twenty-five to thirty steamers bringing over provisions to this country every week. It was not an unusual occurrence to find a large steamer filled with nothing but eggs. He attributed the success of the South-Western Railway Company to the agents employed by them in collecting the traffic.

#### THE DEAD FRIEND.

My sun is darkened, and my broken life  
Creeps sadly on, through never-ending ways  
Of deathless sorrow. In my friendless days  
Hereafter, there must come again the strife  
Wherein he cheered me, and the battle rife  
With weary doubt; but he no more will raise  
The drooping spirit with his kindly praise  
That now is silenced. I have ta'en to wife  
Grim Sorrow; she is mine for evermore.  
Dear friend, upon some far-off silent shore  
I fain would lie with thee, as sometime here,  
In still communion; but between doth pour  
The flood of death, and I may only peer  
Out through dark dreams and know thy spirit near.

HENRY D. LOWRY.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH.